Mother Wisdom

Issue No. 1 1998

Mother Wisdom

is dedicated to women seeking truth, freedom, and dignity, in this spiritually barren age, promoting the ancient, Other-Worldly wisdom of our Spiritual Mothers. Correspondence, trades and/or articles for submission are welcomed.

Mother Wisdom
252 E. 4th St.
Chico, CA 95928

This Page: Women Saints of Holy Russia
Cover Page: A Russian Schemanun

Women and Freedom

Our Spiritual Mothers understood that we must know the purpose of life in order to be free, that we are created not for *this* world but for the *Other World.* They understood that the purpose of this life is to prepare ourselves for eternity. This ancient wisdom has been obscured and distorted by a complex web of deception that enslaves and destroys women.

We have wandered this broken earth in chains, seeking freedom in a world of suffering, insanity and psychic death. We keep trying to manifest our hopes and dreams in this fallen world where everything withers and dies. As our dreams and visions crumble, our souls are filled with an unbearable anguish. The seeds of rich potential that we know lie within us are not bearing fruit. Our sacredness is wasting away...

Only the truth can heal us and set us free. We must seek spiritual truth as a means to lasting freedom--a freedom which no one can take from us. We must discover who we really are, why we exist and why we must die. The world says there is no real answer to these questions and this is the greatest lie that has oppressed and devastated so many women.

Hidden from the eyes of the world are countless women who embraced and cultivated this divine understanding. These were the wise ones. We must find out who these women are as a key to discovering truth and thus obtaining eternal freedom.

-the Editors

Dositheo

Clairvoyant Recluse of the Kiev Caves

Dositheа was born in 1721, near Ryazan, Russia. She lived much of her young childhood with her grandmother who was a nun living in Moscow. Dositheа's grandmother taught her to struggle for virtue by fasting, prayer, and labor.

When Dositheа was nine years old her parents insisted that she leave her grandmother and come to live with them.

Soon Dositheа learned that her relatives wanted to marry her off. This caused her to shed many bitter tears as Dositheа longed only for monasticism. When she was fifteen years old, she secretly left her parents house, disguised herself as a peasant man and fled to the St. Sergius Holy Trinity monastery. She was of a large size with masculine facial features therefore no one suspected that she was a woman in disguise. She began to labor there as a monk.

For three years Dositheа's family searched for her in vain. Once they came to the monastery but Dositheа hid herself amoung the monks and her family did not recognise her. Dositheа then fled to the Kiev Caves monastery and resolved to become a hermit. She dug a cave for herself on a mountain and gave herself over to a strict spiritual life. She never lit a fire, and subsisted only on bread and water. At times she would eat only moss and raw roots. From such a hardcore way of life, Dositheа's voice and facial features became coarse and were changed beyond recognition. Soon she became renouned in all Kiev.

People began to come to Dositheа for advise and consolation. Her counsel was wise, for she was clairvoyant and could read into people's hearts. In the year 1770 she foretold a terrible misfortune. She gave her daily visitors a piece of cherubic incense, telling them to burn a little in their homes. Soon a plague began, which passed by the homes of those who had received the incense.

Once, a young seeker for monastic life who would later become a great saint and wonder worker, came to Dositheа seeking spiritual counsel. Foreseeing his spiritual progress, the blessed recluse directed him to a certain monastery telling him, "Only endeavor to acquire unceasing remembrance God and constantly call on His name thus: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.'...With this you will find peace..."

Once, Dositheа's own sister visited her, but the recluse didn't show her face to her. The sister complained about the disappearance of her sister. Dositheа advised her not to search for her loved ones who were hidden for the sake of God.

When Dosithea was 56 years old, she sensed her death drawing near and came out of reclusion seeking forgiveness from all her monastic brothers. She opened the door of every monk's cell and silently fell on her knees. Having gone around to all, she returned to her own cell and there in the night as she prayed, her soul passed over from death into life on September 25, 1776. The monks found her body the next morning with a note clenched in her hand, on which was written: "My body has been prepared for burial. I pray you, brothers, don't touch it, and give it customary burial." Her words were honored by the monks who never suspected that their beloved brother was really a sister.

At the death of Dosithea, her sister came to Kiev and saw a portrait of the recluse. She recognized her own sister who had disappeared in youth and her life became known to all.

St. Seraphim of Sarov, who came to Dosithea for spiritual guidance.

The Counsels of the Wise

"The soul must know one thing--that only in God is its peace and the end of searching."

-Schemanun Ardaliona

"Freedom is love. Where there is no love there is no freedom."

-Unknown

"Guard yourself against judging, serve all, consider yourself worse than all, preserve love for all in your heart and express it in deed; then you will be at peace."

-Abbess Thaisia (+1915)

"The heart cannot be united to God if it follows after earthly things."

-Blessed Euphemia (+1958)

"I'll tell you one word of experience. During any temptation or depression there is one sure exit and calm solution--and that is humility. Only by this path does the soul come to the truth, which solves everything, warmly healing and freely liberating."

-Abbess Arsenia (+c.1901)

"...truly, to know oneself is the hardest thing of all..."

-St. Basil the Great

CHRIST THE ETERNAL TAO

SELECTION FROM A FORTHCOMING BOOK

From THE SIXTH ENNEAD

The Way of Humility and Forgiveness

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

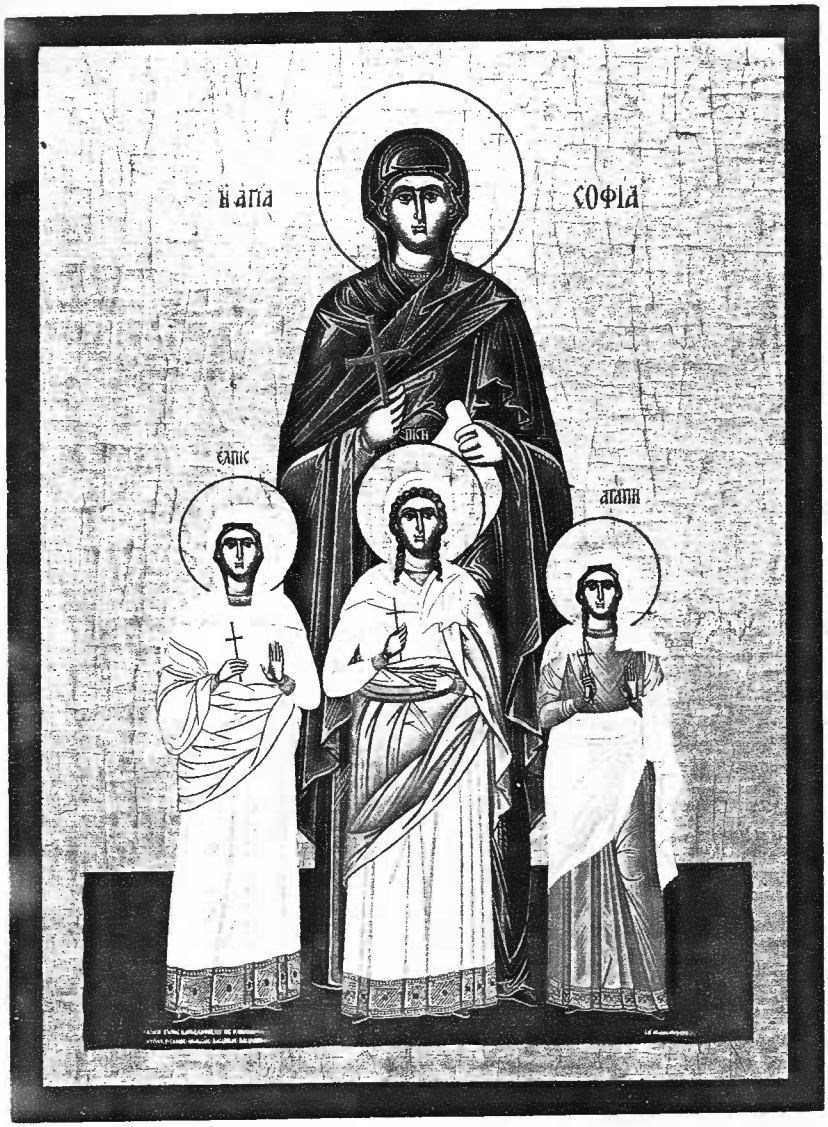
"The softest thing in the universe," said the Ancient Sage,
"Overcomes the hardest thing in the universe.
The stiff and unbending is the disciple of death,
The gentle and yielding is the disciple of life.
A tree that is unbending is easily broken.
The hard and the strong will fall.
The soft and weak will overcome."

If a painful experience comes upon a humble soul,
She bends and thus remains whole.
Straightway she goes against herself,
Straightway she accuses herself,
And she does not set about accusing anyone else.
Thus she goes on her way,
Untroubled, undepressed, in complete peace of mind,
Having no cause to be angry or to anger anyone.

Therefore, said the Sage:
"Mix with all that is humble as dust.
This is called the original harmony.
It cannot be made intimate, nor can it be alienated.
It cannot be benefited, nor can it be harmed.
It cannot be exalted, nor can it be debased.
For this very reason it is the highest, most valuable thing in the world."

The humble soul, at one with the dust of the earth,
Knows the power behind saying, "Forgive me."
She is among the strongest in the world,
For nothing is more powerful than lowliness.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN
1–2 *Tao Teh Ching*, ch. 43 (Gia-fu Feng, trans.).
3–7 Ibid., ch. 76.



The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Faith, Hope and Love and Their Mother Sophia

The following is a true account of women who were tortured and killed for refusing to worship the goddess Artemis. This account may be too graphic for some readers.....*

During the reign of the cruel Roman Emperor Hadrian (118-138 A.D.) there lived a widowed woman named Sophia, whose name means wisdom. Her ancestors were among the first leaders of Rome. As befits her name she lived wisely, not valuing the superficial and vain things of this world, but penetrating deeply into the eternal realm of spiritual truth. This wise and gentle woman had three daughters, whom she named Faith, Hope and Love.

Sophia taught her daughters the truth of God and the other world. Faith, Hope and Love were filled with Divine wisdom and word spread throughout

*Also known as the goddess "Diana."

Rome of their beauty and strength. When the corrupt Emperor Hadrian heard of their purity and love for the Crucified God he sent his servants to bring the daughters before him that he might through violence, force them to worship the pagan gods. By not sacrificing to the gods, it was believed that calamities would assail the land: the sky would withhold its rain; and there would be earthquakes, fires, famine, pestilences, and every evil. Thus any person who refused to offer sacrifices to the gods was believed to be endangering the whole community.

When Sophia learned of the Emperor's summons she immediately understood what to expect, for thousands of people were being tortured and killed at that time for their faith in Christ.. Sophia began to strengthen and inspire her daughters to endure the violence that was to come--for having unfailing hope in the other world, she did not weep or grow fearful but was filled with supernatural resolve.

"My beloved daughters, the hour has come for you to rejoice", Sophia explained to her children, "for you shall be crowned with the crown of martyrdom. In accordance with your names, may you display firm faith, undoubting hope, and unfeigned love. For the sake of life eternal, pity not the bloom of your youth nor hesitate to suffer the deprivation of this fleeting life. For your Beloved, Jesus Christ, Who dwells in the heavens, is eternal well-being and beauty inexpressible. When your bodies have been tortured to death for His sake, He will robe them in incorruption, and the wounds which you bear on your flesh will shine like stars in heaven. He will adorn you with heavenly beauty, such as the eye has not beheld."

The three daughters hearkened with compunction to their mother's words and their hearts were enflamed with love for God. The girls were then brought before the heartless Emperor. Faith was 12 years, Hope was 10 years old and Love was only 9 years old. The emperor seeing their age thought they could easily be brought to obey his deceptive words.

"I see, children", the emperor explained, "that you are fair, and I pity your youth. I advise you to worship the gods who rule the universe. If you do not obey me then much evil will befall you. I will cause you to perish miserably and will cast out your severed limbs to be food for dogs, and you will be despised by all. Therefore, obey me. that it might go well for you. I care for you

and do not wish to destroy your beauty; rather I desire to have you as my children."

The holy virgins answered the persecutor as though with a single voice, saying, "God, Who dwells in heaven, is our Father, Who takes care for our lives and has mercy on our souls. His love we desire. We keep His commandments. Your threats do not frighten us, for we wish to suffer and bear bitter torments for the sake of our sweet God, Jesus Christ."

Hadrian

Saint Faith

The Emperor marveled at the children's spirit and intelligence. He then began to attempt to force each of them to submit to his impiety, beginning with Faith, the eldest sister to whom he said, "Sacrifice to the great goddess Artemis!" But Faith would not agree to submit. Therefore the Emperor had her stripped naked and ordered that she be beaten severely. The torturers thrashed her mercilessly, saying, "Sacrifice to the great goddess Artemis!", but Faith remained silent as though it were another's body which bore the suffering. Since the tormentors accomplished nothing by flogging her, the wicked Emperor commanded that Faith's virginal breasts be cut off. Seeing milk instead of blood flow from her wounds, the people shook their heads and secretly reproached the Emperor for his cruelty.

Then a metal gridiron was brought, which was placed on a great fire which had been kindled. When it had been heated red hot, the young martyr Faith was placed upon it, but was not burnt at all, to the astonishment of everyone present. Then she was cast into a cauldron filled with boiling pitch and oil, but there too she remained unharmed, sitting as though she were in cool water, singing to God. The persecutor,

not knowing what else to do with her to weaken her faith in Christ, sentenced her be beheaded by the sword.

When the saint heard this, she was filled with inexpressible joy. Faith's honorable head was cut off and she departed to the otherworld, where there is no sickness nor sorrow but life everlasting. Her mother took her much suffering body, and as she kissed it, she rejoiced and glorified Christ God, Who had received her daughter into the heavenly bridal chamber.

Then the impious Emperor had the second sister, the holy virgin Hope, brought before him, and he said to her, "Good child, I appeal to you as a father who loves you. Heed my advise and worship the great goddess Artemis so that you might not perish as your sister did. You have seen her bitter death. Do you wish to suffer likewise?"

Saint Hope replied, "O Emperor, do not imagine that I shall reason, think or desire differently than my sister Faith. I am ready to follow her path; do not delay but begin that which you have resolved to do."

Saint Hope

When the emperor heard this reply, he handed Hope over to the torturers. They stripped her and beat her so long and mercilessly that they grew weary. But Hope remained silent as though she suffered no pain. Then the emperor commanded that Hope be cast into the fire, but she remained unharmed. After this, she was suspended and scraped with iron claws. Her flesh was torn off, streams of blood gushed out, and a wondrous fragrance came forth from her wounds. Her countenance shone forth with the grace of the Holy Spirit. She spoke to the persecutor thus:

"Having Christ's help, I fear no torments; rather I desire them as I desire the sweet things of paradise, so sweet is my God to me."

These words greatly angered the tormentor, who ordered that Hope be cast into a cauldron filled with boiling pitch and oil. As the Emperor's servants were preparing to hurl the saint into it, the kettle suddenly melted down like wax, and the hot pitch and oil poured forth on all who stood nearby.

Saint Love

The persecutor thus seeing himself put to shame by the young child and not wishing to bear further humiliation, condemned the saint to beheading.

Hope then embraced her mother and kissed her sister, Love, who had been watching her torture, and said to her, "Do not linger here, sister, but hasten, that we might enter the presence of the Holy Trinity together." Hope went to the headless corpse of her sister, Saint Faith, and kissed it lovingly. Then she bowed her head beneath the sword, and was thus beheaded. Her mother then inspired the third daughter with sweet words and wise counsels to endure the Emperor's cruelty.

The persecutor summoned Love, the third maiden, seeking to entice her to abandon the Crucified One and to worship the goddess Artemis, but his words were spoken in vain. Realizing that he was unable to accomplish anything with his threats and flatteries, he began to have Love tortured. He ordered that she be stretched out upon a wheel and beaten with rods. The saint's young body was stretched in such a way that her members were pulled from their sockets, and she was beaten until she had been dyed as red as scarlet by her blood, which watered the earth like rain.

The tormentor then showed the saint a furnace which had been heated white hot, and he said, "Maiden, say only that the goddess Artemis is great, and I will release you. But if you will not, you will without delay be burnt in the fiery furnace." The Saint Love replied, "Great is my God Jesus Christ!"

The persecutor became enraged, and ordered those standing nearby to hurl Love into the furnace. The saint did not wait for another to cast her into the furnace, but she hastened to enter it herself. She walked into the furnace but was not burned, and she rejoiced as though she were in a cool place, singing and blessing God. And at once fire shot forth from the furnace, consuming the unbelievers standing nearby. The Emperor himself was singed, and he fled far

Scene from a fresco depicting the beheading of Faith, Hope and Love.

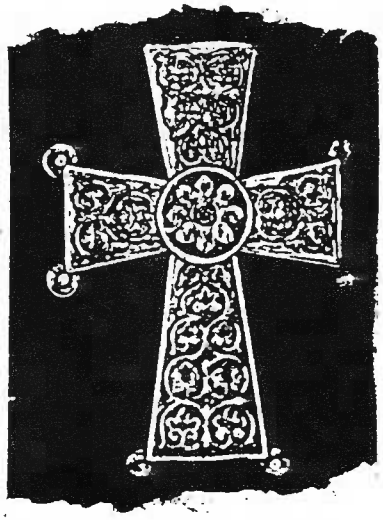
from the furnace. Within the furnace celestial beings of brilliant beauty, clad in white could be seen rejoicing together with the martyr.

When the furnace was extinguished Love emerged radiant and unharmed. The torturers then seized her and bored through her arms and legs with drills, but Love still did not die. Finally she was given over to the sword to be beheaded and thus she gave her soul over to God in joy and gladness.

By Divine providence, the mother, Sophia, was not given over to physical torture, rather, her torture was having to endure the violence afflicted upon her beloved daughters. Sophia was released and took the holy relics of her daughters and reverently buried them outside the city. She wept for joy and prayed by their grave for three days after which she died peacefully. Such was the strength of these holy women's love for truth and the sweet taste of its freedom that they willingly endured such torture, consumed by love for God. Many people have received miraculous healings of soul and body through the prayers of these holy women.

liberation

We all have chains that bind us
each of us has a prison cell
Outside we are carefree
showing no evidence of our
state of despair
inside we are like a madman
fighting for sanity, fighting in vain
in a world where everything is fleeting
Why keep struggling to live?
it is the constant hope of liberation
We find consolation in temporary things
because they leave us we are
made slaves to them
We are fooled into thinking that we've
found peace.
When we've only
surrendered to the whip
The day of redemption
will come when we
face ourselves and
God



– AUGUSTA
Kansas City, MO

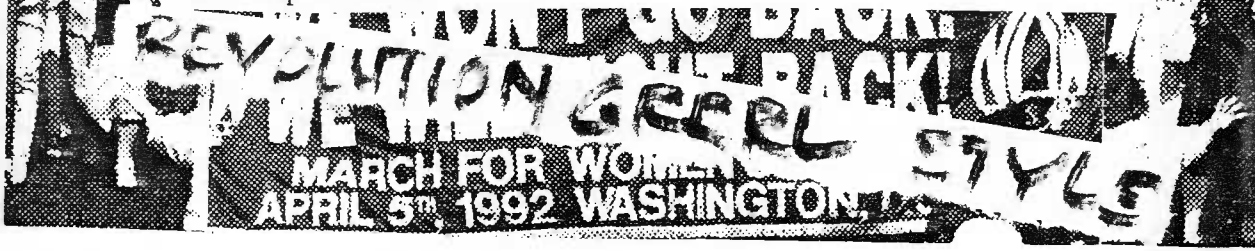
the Call

When I was young my mom believed in God and she taught me to pray. She said God was good and on the side of women and children. One night while tucking me in bed she told me about Christ's crucifixion and how people gave him vinegar to drink while he thirsted on the cross. She said this was sorrowful. She taught me about compassion and forgiveness. I believed everything she said and knew it was good. But my dad was cynical--for the Protestant Christianity he had been exposed to most of his life was worldly, weak, hypocritical and dry--completely void of any other-worldly mysticism. Over the course of a few years, my whole family forgot God, even my mom.

In high school I discovered feminism and was voted most likely to picket the White House, which I later ended up doing, four times.

After high school I became a radical feminist activist. Everywhere I marched and protested. I couldn't believe the world was so fake and greedy. I wanted everybody to wake up. Some friends and I formed a radical feminist group called F.I.R.E. (Fighting Ideologies Resistant to Equality). We organized all kinds of protests and "zap actions" in which we would hit the city streets with cans of spray paint and chalk, writing feminist slogans wherever we saw fit, trying to combat the increasing number of rapes in our city in this way. After a while I began to notice that the same things we despised and rebelled against in the world were also growing in our hearts but we justified it somehow. We claimed to honor diversity but we only embraced those who were just like us.

In time, my dream of feminist sisterhood completely unraveled and the pain compelled me onward--out of the realm of political and social activism and into the spiritual realm.



I thought maybe I should be a witch. I decided to secretly cast a spell on a friend of mine for him "to see the truth". I didn't know what the truth was but I believed in the power of spells and women. After I cast the spell I waited to see what would happen. A few weeks later my friend vanished without a trace. Everyone thought he was dead. "Maybe death is the truth?", I wondered nervously, wringing my hands. Then I got word that he had been found. He had wandered the city for three days and three nights in some kind of daze. He was picked up by the police and checked into a psychiatric ward. Apparently he had suffered some kind of complete mental breakdown. Nobody knew what had caused it or if he would ever recover.

I fell to my knees. How could this have happened? What does this mean? Is insanity the truth?!? I agonized over my friend's condition, pleading with the forces that be to heal him. After several days my friend miraculously recovered and was saying he had found God. When I went to see him in the hospital, his eyes welled up with tears. "Christ is the truth", he said and wept.

My heart was pierced with a sword. I didn't want Christ to be the truth because I had learned to associate everything related to him as oppresive to women. I kept trying to figure out how this could have happened. I could not accept Christ as something good, no matter what. I traveled all over the country trying to forget about the spell. Over the next two years I sank into total despair. Everything seemed pointless and cruel. Life was meaningless. Reality was horrifyingly absurd. I kept waking up day after day to this nightmare. The question of truth continually gnawed at me and I knew no peace. I couldn't believe I existed.

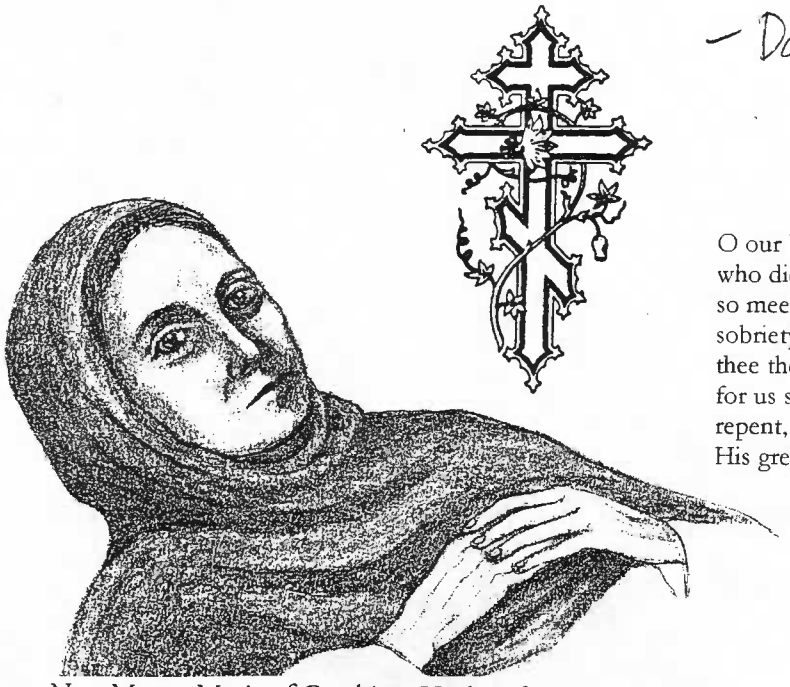
In desperation I went to a Protestant church to see if Christ was true. It was embarrassing. People were jumping around, clapping their hands and dancing to "Christian rock". I couldn't believe God was haunting me so badly because I refused to consent to this!!! Drowning in fear and despair I made myself a personal enemy of Christ and everyone who claimed to know Truth. Everywhere I mocked God and breathed forth wrath and hopelessness. I hated my parents for having casually brought me into this insane world of suffering, corruption and death. I wanted to kill myself so badly but I couldn't shake the nagging sense that I'd regret it if I did.

One night, in a city where I was living, there was a brutal slaying of five kids who worked in a video store. I laid down on my bed and wept bitterly. "Why couldn't it have been me?". My roommate tapped on my door and said a package had just come in the mail. It was from the person I had cast the spell on almost two years earlier. I opened the package. It was a book published by an Orthodox Christian monastery where he was visiting. I opened it and began to read about a woman who was a healer of depression.

The woman I read about was a Russian nun named Maria, who suffered from Parkinson's Disease (painful inflammation of the brain). This disease had made her a total invalid but she did not murmur against God. She was filled with an unearthly humility, patience and love for God. "How is this possible?", I wondered. In time she was granted an otherworldly gift: consolation of the sorrowing. Completely strange and unknown people, finding themselves in sorrows, grief and depression began to visit and converse with her. Everyone who came to her left consoled, feeling an illumination of their grief, a calming of fears, a taking away of depression. I was deeply moved by this idea of a woman who spiritually consoled others. Then I saw a prayer printed below a picture of her face. The way the prayer was worded it sounded like people could pray to her and she would help. I couldn't believe this! Pray to a woman!?! I was amazed. I closed the book and cried out, "Maria, please help me!" Within moments I sensed a strange loosening of something that seemed to have been strangling my soul. I immediately grew calm.

Over the following weeks a miracle of faith was birthed in my soul. I felt as though God had visited my heart and asked me why I hated him so much since he was good and on the side of women and children. It was like I was remembering something I had forgotten long ago...

– Dorothea



New Martyr Maria of Gatchina, Healer of Depression.

O our blessed Mother Maria, * who didst bear the cross of illness so meekly and humbly, * with such sobriety and prayer that God granted thee the gift of consolation. * Pray for us sinners who know not how to repent, * that God may grant us His great mercy.

Mother Wisdom
252 E. 4th St.
Chico, CA 95928

"Get wisdom, get understanding... Forsake her not and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor... She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee... keep her; for she *is* thy life."